



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Consumer
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO
80204-2581

Reply to
Attn of:

SP-02-03

OCT 11 2001

Subject:

Submission of Free and Reduced Price Applications
By All Households

To:

STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas,
(Child Nutrition Programs) Missouri ED, Montana OPI,
Nebraska, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

This is in response to concerns regarding application procedures in the Child Nutrition Programs. It has come to our attention that with increasing frequency school officials are requiring the submission of a free and reduced price meal application from all households with children enrolled in their school regardless of whether the household wishes to make application for free or reduced price meal benefits.

The National School Lunch Program, which includes snacks, the School Breakfast Program and the Special Milk Program require that school food authorities inform households of the availability of the program(s) and how a household may apply for free and reduced price benefits (7 CFR 245.5). However, neither the National School Lunch Act, the Child Nutrition Act or the regulations and guidance material governing these programs establish a requirement that would mandate submission of an application for free or reduced price benefits. While school officials must make families aware of the availability of free and reduced price meals and may even request that households apply, school officials may not require that a household submit an application for free or reduced price meal benefits. A school or school food authority wishing to require income information from all households with enrolled children must secure that income information through means other than the household's application for free or reduced price school meal benefits. School food authorities that provide households with multi-use applications, which include both meal program benefits as well as non-food benefits, must ensure that the process does not violate the requirements specified herein.

We recognize that state agencies and school food authorities have already printed meal application forms and parent letters for school year 2001-2002. Therefore, this policy takes effect as of the date of this memorandum and does not require retroactive implementation. If you have any questions, please contact our office at (303) 844-0355.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brian Allison".

BRIAN ALLISON
Acting Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs